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New York

Chairman: Mr. Sychou ..... (Belarus)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda items 60 to 81 (*continued*)

General debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items

The Chairman: Before calling on the first speaker, I would like to welcome Fellows of the United Nations disarmament fellowship programme, who are here today to observe the proceedings of the First Committee.

Mr. Muhammed (Ethiopia): Allow me on behalf of my delegation to extend to you, Sir, and to the other members of the Bureau our congratulations on your elections to lead the deliberations of the First Committee. I wish to assure you, Sir, of my delegation's full cooperation and support in the discharge of the heavy responsibilities bestowed on you as Chairman of this important Committee.

Ethiopia believes that the elimination of weapons of mass destruction remains high on the international community's disarmament agenda in the post-cold war era. The production, stockpiling and proliferation of these cruel weapons continues unabated, posing a major challenge to international peace and security. The challenge and potential danger posed by weapons of mass destruction can be avoided only through the total elimination of such weapons. This requires, above all, firm commitment and practical action by all concerned, in particular by those who produce, possess, acquire and transfer these weapons.

After more than two and half years of intensive multilateral negotiations, the international community has shown its strong determination for the cessation of nuclear tests by endorsing the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). Because it constrains the development and qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons and ends the development of new advanced types of nuclear weapons, the cessation of nuclear-weapon-test explosions constitutes an important step in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. In this context, we believe that, in spite of its shortcomings, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty will contribute to the process of nuclear disarmament and to the enhancement of international peace and security.

Ethiopia has signed the CTBT, and firmly supports the effective implementation of the Treaty. We believe that a universal and internationally verifiable CTBT will provide further impetus for consolidating the non-proliferation regime. We are also convinced that the time is now ripe to start nuclear disarmament negotiations that would lead to an agreement on the elimination of nuclear weapons within a specific time-frame. In this connection, my delegation wishes to stress that serious consideration should be given to the proposal made by 28 non-aligned and other countries members of the Conference on Disarmament, relating to a programme of action for the elimination of nuclear weapons.

The Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction has been open for signature since January 1993. The trigger point of the deposit of 65 instruments of ratification, which will ensure the entry into force of the Convention, now seems very

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close, with 64 States having already deposited their instruments of ratification with the Secretary-General. We hope that the one remaining ratification needed will be secured in the very near future so that the Convention can enter into force as soon as possible. Ratification of the Convention, in particular by the two declared chemical-weapon States, the United States of America and the Russian Federation, is indispensable to ensure that the basic aim of the Convention — the elimination of all chemical weapons and related production facilities within a specific time-frame — can be achieved.

Ethiopia fully supported the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction throughout the process of its negotiations and final adoption. This active interest and participation, and the fact that Ethiopia has already deposited the instrument of ratification of the Treaty, testify to its firm commitment to the eradication of chemical weapons. While Ethiopia is committed to the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention, we, however, find it necessary to express our concern at the ongoing attempt to enlarge restrictions on chemicals and chemical-related technologies for developing countries beyond what is stipulated in the treaty. This, in our opinion, could create an atmosphere of distrust and undermine the effectiveness of the treaty. We believe that one of the basic principles of the Chemical Weapons Convention is equal treatment of all Member States that are parties to the instrument. In this context, we strongly emphasize the need to foster confidence and trust for the effective implementation of the Convention.

Regional security is an integral part of global security. After more than 30 years of strenuous efforts, African countries have achieved their long-sought-after objective of declaring Africa a nuclear-weapon-free zone in April this year by signing the Treaty of Pelindaba. We are pleased that this Treaty has been accepted by four of the major nuclear-weapon States, and that the remaining major nuclear Power has also indicated that it would take a similar step. This Treaty represents an important step towards strengthening the non-proliferation regime, promoting general and complete disarmament and enhancing regional and international peace and security.

The Treaty of Pelindaba, together with previously concluded regional nuclear-weapon-free-zone treaties, namely the Treaties of Tlatelolco, Rarotonga and Bangkok, expands the regime of nuclear-weapon-free zones to cover a significantly large part of the world, thus contributing to nuclear disarmament and the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free world. In the light of this, Ethiopia supports the initiative of Brazil and other countries to submit a First Committee draft resolution on a nuclear-weapon-free southern hemisphere and adjacent areas.

The problem of landmines represents one of the most troubling challenges confronting the international community in this post-cold-war period. Anti-personnel landmines in particular continue to pose a serious threat to the lives of millions of people in many parts of the world and gravely affect economic, social and humanitarian activities. The problems of anti-personnel landmines are not limited to their indiscriminate use in armed conflicts, since once conflicts have ceased, they continue to cause casualties and human suffering, and hinder efforts at nation-building, economic reconstruction and development. To reverse this situation and to find a lasting solution to the problem of anti-personnel landmines, concerted efforts should be made at the national, regional and international levels.

Ethiopia is one of the many African countries that are seriously affected by anti-personnel landmines. In recognition of the gravity of this problem, the Government of Ethiopia, with the technical assistance and cooperation of a number of countries, has embarked on a demining programme. While the Government of Ethiopia is encouraged by the results achieved and is committed to continuing the demining programme, it is recognized at the same time that much remains to be done to get rid of all the landmines scattered in various parts of the country, and that this immense task cannot be completed without international support in the form of technical and financial assistance.

My delegation is pleased to state that, at the regional level, the Organization of African Unity has given serious attention to the problem of anti-personnel landmines, and that member States of that organization have committed themselves to a total ban on the production, use, stockpiling, sale and export of such weapons. We are also encouraged by the similar positions taken in other regions of the world.

The efforts in various multilateral forums to strengthen the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or To Have Indiscriminate Effects and its amended Protocol II, as well as the moratoriums on the export of anti-personnel landmines already declared by some mine-exporting countries, are all important steps to halt the proliferation and use of landmines. We believe that these efforts should culminate

in a global ban on anti-personnel landmines through the conclusion of a legally binding international instrument. In this context, Ethiopia fully supports the draft resolution on an international agreement to ban anti-personnel landmines which is being circulated in document A/C.1/51/L.46 for the consideration of the First Committee.

Mr. Nkurlu (Tanzania): Mr. Chairman, allow me to associate myself with other speakers in congratulating you and the other members of the Bureau on your election to steer the deliberations of the First Committee. We confidently look forward to a successful and productive session under your able and skilful guidance. I pledge my delegation's support and cooperation.

A year ago, the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations afforded us an opportunity to take stock of the achievements and shortcomings in the entire disarmament and international security mechanism during the period of the Organization's existence. While mixed feelings were expressed with regard to the past, we saw a future full of enthusiasm and optimism. As we meet here again a year later and indeed less than four years from a new millennium, what does the international community have in store for the future of our children? What kind of world will they live in? And does the United Nations have a vision for their future?

If these children had their way, the response to those questions would be spontaneous. They would want a peaceful, secure, prosperous and, hence, stable world. They would choose a world free of wars, ethnic conflicts and violence. They would want to cast aside vices which breed misery and poverty and which perpetuate instability. Of course, they would love to see a world free of weapons of mass destruction, stockpiles of fissile material and above all, many fewer conventional weapons, to enable them to live a peaceful life.

Are we anywhere near these objectives and aspirations? Are we genuinely, deliberately and steadily moving towards a stable, secure and prosperous world? Unfortunately not. The world is still fraught with civil wars and ethnic violence which cost the lives of thousands of innocent people. The world still possesses more than 20,000 deadly nuclear warheads and enormous stockpiles of chemical and biological weapons which pose a great threat to international peace and security. Conventional weapons are vigorously being targeted at conflict-afflicted areas and their production is escalating in a number of countries, especially in the industrialized North.

We are concerned at the existence of so many weapons around the world at levels beyond the legitimate defense needs of nations. The attention given to nuclear weapons reflects the great concern of the international community over the great danger posed to international peace and security by these weapons of mass destruction. Regrettably, notwithstanding the fact that nuclear arms pose the gravest threat to world peace, these have not received the priority consideration they deserve in the appropriate bilateral and multilateral forums.

The START II Treaty — which was signed early in 1993 and was envisaged to reduce the number of warheads for all strategic weapons to 7,500 — has yet to take effect. Some nuclear-weapon States still cling to their nuclear deterrence policy. That is why they are increasing their nuclear weapon cooperation to unprecedented levels. This is a clear indication of their resolve to retain and perfect their nuclear arsenals.

While taking cognizance of the recent adoption of a Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), I note that it is regrettable that the Treaty failed to live up to the expectations of the majority of States. As a staunch supporter and advocate of the CTBT over the years, Tanzania has always considered such a Treaty to constitute a major breakthrough towards the total elimination of these horrendous weapons.

Unfortunately, the text which was adopted renders the Treaty less than comprehensive, as it allows the most technologically sophisticated nuclear States to continue the vertical proliferation of nuclear arsenals through other means. The Treaty makes no significant contribution towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons within a time-bound framework; rather, it reinforces the perpetual exclusivity of a nuclear weapon club.

In this respect, my delegation commends the timely advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice which asserts that the threat or use of nuclear weapons is generally contrary to the rules of international humanitarian law applicable to armed conflicts. This opinion has opened a new chapter in the legal framework of nuclear disarmament by rightly recognizing that there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith, and to bring to conclusion, negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control. Once again, this ruling reminds us of an obligation already undertaken by nuclear-weapon States under article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

It is in this context that we sincerely appeal to nuclear-weapon States to support the programme of action for the elimination of nuclear weapons spearheaded by the group of 28 in the Conference on Disarmament. With the current favourable international environment, nuclear-weapon States need to go a step further by subscribing in practice to the eventual elimination of nuclear arsenals. This means they must stop, reverse and ultimately put an end to the scourge of nuclear proliferation.

In the same vein, my delegation supports the holding of a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament to review critical aspects of nuclear disarmament in order to facilitate a better and safer future for our children.

In the quest for world peace and security, my delegation attaches great importance to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction. With 64 countries having so far ratified the Convention, it is saddening to note that those with the largest stockpiles of weapons have yet to do so. The effectiveness of the Chemical Weapons Convention, which is only one country short of reaching the threshold for its entry into force, will be seriously undermined if the United States and the Russian Federation in particular remain outside the Convention. Therefore, the importance of their speedy ratification of the Convention cannot be overemphasized.

Over the years, conventional weapons have been a major factor fuelling conflicts ranging from full-fledged wars to various forms of violence throughout the world. Anti-personnel landmines are just one category of such weapons which have caused havoc and misery to tens of thousands of people, mostly to innocent women and children. While we would welcome a ban on anti-personnel landmines in the near future, Tanzania is of the view that banning these weapons will not solve the real problems if it is done without a comprehensive framework which addresses all aspects of the problem, including those of producers of the weapons, and the underlying political conflicts of interest which these weapons serve and sustain.

Most important, the majority of the less-armed Member States, some of which see these weapons as the "weapons of the weak", need to assure themselves that efforts to ban these anti-personnel landmines are motivated by a genuine desire to pursue disarmament, and not by the insatiable appetite of those already over-armed to disarm the rest of the world and hold it to political ransom.

Concrete action in the field of nuclear and conventional disarmament on the part of the nuclear-weapon States and other military Powers would serve to demonstrate such genuine commitment to work towards a safer world and also serve as an added incentive to disarm.

The efforts to ban conventional arms will be rendered equally useless if the international community does not strive to reduce drastically the production of these weapons and to stop deliberately promoting their export, especially in areas where violence and conflict are endemic. In addition, whatever measures are taken to ban conventional weapons must not detract us from the real priority, which is weapons of mass destruction.

The destructive capacity of an anti-personnel landmines is a drop in the ocean compared to an explosion of one nuclear warhead. Presenting a paper early this year in New York, the Nobel Peace Prize recipient Joseph Rotblat rightly pointed out that,

> "Nuclear bombs are made to appear as not much different quantitatively from the ordinary bombs with which most of us are nowadays familiar. A nuclear war is made to look like a larger scale conventional war. Nuclear weapons are not a larger scale version of conventional weapons. They are in an entirely different category. The energy released when a single atom of plutonium undergoes fission is tens of millions times greater than the energy released per atom in a conventional explosion."

Indeed, the elimination of these horrible weapons must remain our main preoccupation.

Against this backdrop, Tanzania fully supports the establishment of the nuclear-weapon-free zone in the southern hemisphere and adjacent areas. This will be a significant development complementing other similar efforts in various parts of the world, which have resulted in the Treaty of Tlatelolco for Latin America, the Treaty of Rarotonga for the South Pacific, the Treaty of Bangkok for South-East Asia, and the Treaty of Pelindaba for Africa. We hope, after half the world is declared nuclear-free, that this will send a clear signal to the North to follow suit and free itself and the rest of the world from the menace of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

The establishment of a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean is a matter of paramount importance to my country. When, 26 years ago, the Non-Aligned Movement summit in Lusaka decided to establish the zone, it was guided by a

strong commitment to work towards the realization of the goals of peace, security and stability in the region. Regrettably, for almost two decades now, the implementation of the zone has eluded the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean, which has been deserted by some permanent members of the Security Council and other major maritime users of the Ocean.

During the initial years, the cold war prevented progress towards the intended goal. Now, paradoxically, with a greatly improved global environment that encourages mutual trust and cooperation among nations, it has not been possible to rekindle that spirit within the Ad Hoc Committee. We cannot but express our concern about the security of the region and about the grave implications of the presence of external military forces in the Indian Ocean region. We call upon all the parties concerned, especially the three Western permanent members of the Security Council, to gather political courage, rejoin the Ad Hoc Committee and work jointly with the rest of the world towards establishing a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean region.

We wish to express our profound hope that the deliberations of this session will contribute positively to the acceleration of the disarmament process, with a clear focus on weapons of mass destruction. Taking a leaf from the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice, coupled with the prevailing conducive international environment, the international community must strive to build a safer place for our children.

Mr. Pham Quang Vinh (Viet Nam): May I first extend to you, Mr. Chairman, and to the other members of the Bureau, the warmest congratulations of the delegation of Viet Nam. Aware of the heavy workload ahead for this Committee, my delegation assures you, Sir, and the Bureau full cooperation in bringing the Committee's work to a fruitful conclusion.

The question of international security and disarmament, especially nuclear disarmament, continues to be high on the agenda of the international community and that of the United Nations system. The end of the cold war opens new opportunities, and the danger of a nuclear holocaust has been driven further away. Progress has been achieved in several areas in the field of disarmament and international security. Yet great challenges exist. Wars and conflicts persist. Arsenals of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, though reduced, remain large.

Speaking today, I have the benefit of the analysis already presented by many delegations during the last six days of the general debate. Most prominent is the expressed recognition of cooperation as a necessary premise for assuring progress in the field of disarmament and international security. Sharing that view, we further call for greater joint efforts, and we highlight the important role of multilateral mechanisms in the common endeavour towards achieving a better, more secure world.

Today we are witnessing renewed momentum for progress towards nuclear disarmament. My delegation welcomes recent positive achievements in this process, among them the adoption of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), the review and strengthening of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones Four such zones are now in place. We welcome the idea of a nuclear-weapon-free southern hemisphere.

Highlighted among the positive developments are also those in South-East Asia. The region's economy continues to grow dynamically. Joint efforts are being made by the countries of the region further to enhance cooperation in all fields. In this respect, the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) has been playing an important and constructive role. A case in point is that last year, on ASEAN's initiative, the South-East Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ) was established. SEANWFZ has been broadly welcomed. It is hoped that it will soon be recognized by all nuclear-weapon countries.

International security is multifold, and the world we are living in today is increasingly interdependent. While recognizing the importance of cooperation and compromise in achieving any multilateral disarmament treaties and agreements, we must further stress the fundamental elements upon which these achievements need to be based and to be made sustainable. The most important principle remains that security must be ensured for all States, especially for small and non-nuclear-weapon States. True treaties must be negotiated and adopted on the basis of respect for the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and of goodwill, fairness and good faith. Further, they must serve as the building blocks towards attaining the broader, ultimate common goal, not as elements to delay or even to compromise it.

Thus, besides the positive results achieved, there is yet much to be done, if viewed in the light of this purpose. The CTBT, while being welcome, must become a component of the pursuit of the elimination of all nuclear weapons.

Considering it a positive step, Viet Nam has signed this Treaty. At the same time, it calls for concrete action to be taken to free this world of these horrible weapons. Viet Nam also stresses that verification activities must be carried out in a fair and impartial manner, with full respect for the sovereignty of States.

Important commitments were adopted as part of the indefinite extension of the NPT last year. Those commitments — among them the strengthening of the NPT review, the initiation of negotiations towards nuclear disarmament, and assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States against the threat or use of nuclear weapons — are not to be forgotten. They constitute elements of the forthcoming NPT review process and must be realized. In that respect, the proposal for a programme of action for the elimination of nuclear weapons put forward by 28 countries at the Conference on Disarmament deserves serious consideration.

As the challenges ahead remain numerous, a message needs to be renewed. We must build upon the achievements already recorded and make further progress through joint efforts based on mutual confidence, mutual respect and security for all States. Viet Nam will make active contributions in the common endeavour to make this world a better world.

Mr. Molander (Sweden): Let me first extend to you, Mr. Chairman, my congratulations on your election and my pleasure at seeing you presiding over our deliberations.

The last time I spoke in the First Committee was in November 1995. At that time I had to report that, in spite of great efforts, the Review Conference of the Convention on the Prohibition or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects had not been able to reach a conclusion on the revision of Protocol II. This time, I am happy to say, I can report to you, as President of that Conference, its successful conclusion in May of this year. The revision of the Landmine Protocol was finally achieved, albeit through a particularly difficult and complicated negotiating process.

During that last phase of negotiations there was a sudden and growing support for a total ban on anti-personnel mines. When Sweden, as the first country, formally proposed a total ban in August 1994, only a few States parties supported that proposal. At the conclusion of the Review Conference, more than 40 States advocated a total ban. However, that could not be fully reflected in the outcome of the review, particularly as many countries still feel that this weapon remains a necessary and legitimate asset of their territorial defence.

As a result, the outcome of the Conference was described by some observers as an inadequate compromise and a failure. I emphatically disagree with such judgements. On the contrary, the amended Protocol sets a global minimum standard which, if implemented, will definitely save lives. Let me give you a short list of those new provisions that strengthen the rules of the Protocol's original version.

The scope of application of the Protocol has been extended to cover internal conflicts. This constitutes a breakthrough in the development of international humanitarian law.

The use of non-detectable anti-personnel landmines has been forbidden.

The use of anti-personnel landmines that do not self-destruct and self-deactivate, with a combined reliability of 99.9 per cent, within 120 days of activation outside fenced, marked and monitored minefields has been forbidden.

Anti-sensing devices on all types of mine have been forbidden.

The general restrictions regarding the use of all types of mine have been strengthened, particularly regarding marking and recording.

The rules to protect peacekeeping and other forces and missions of the United Nations, as well as humanitarian missions and missions from the International Committee of the Red Cross, from the effects of minefields and mined areas have been substantially strengthened.

The States parties are obliged to impose penal sanctions individually on any person within their jurisdiction for violations of the material provisions of the Protocol. Thus, violations against the Landmine Protocol will basically be treated as war crimes.

States parties are obliged to disseminate knowledge about the substantive provisions of the Protocol and to issue relevant operating procedures to their armed forces.

The revised Protocol lays down a strict responsibility for the mine-laying party either to clear or to maintain the mines that it has in place in the course of conflict.

A new article on assistance and technological cooperation aims at sharing technology in mine clearance and rehabilitation of victims.

A new article prohibits the transfer of non-detectable anti-personnel mines and long-lived remote-delivery mines with immediate effect. It further restricts transfer of all mines, particularly to States that are not parties to the Protocol, and prohibits the transfer of mines to any entity that is not a State or an agent of a State.

While it proved impossible to reach consensus on a verification system in case of alleged violations, the Conference agreed on a system of yearly meetings of the States parties. At those meetings the operation and the status of the Protocol will be discussed, and, indeed, implementation issues may be raised.

It was decided to hold the next Review Conference in the year 2001, that is, five years from now.

Since the conclusion of the Review Conference a number of initiatives have been taken on the national, regional and international levels towards the goal of a comprehensive ban on anti-personnel landmines. To give only a few examples, on the unilateral level my own Government recently took the step of complementing the Swedish call for a global ban with a unilateral ban on all anti-personnel mines, including the destruction of our substantive stockpile within a set time-frame. On the regional level, an agreement to ban anti-personnel mines was signed in June between six countries in Central America.

On the international level, a few weeks ago a large group of countries joined in the Ottawa Declaration, in which they committed themselves to work for the earliest possible conclusion of a legally binding international agreement to ban anti-personnel mines. On the same occasion, Canadian Foreign Affairs Minister Lloyd Axworthy announced that he was hoping to gather a large number of countries to sign an international ban on anti-personnel mines in December of next year.

These initiatives are certainly useful and important. To many countries, however, anti-personnel landmines constitute an important part of their national defence. Consequently, the amended Landmine Protocol will for the foreseeable future remain the only universally acceptable regulation of the use of landmines. It constitutes the best possible common ground for the purpose of reducing or eliminating the risk to civilians and noncombatants, both for countries using landmines and for countries renouncing their use.

I think it is important to emphasize that under these rules none of the present crisis situations relating to landmines could have occurred on such a scale. For this reason, swift and universal adherence to and implementation of the amended Landmine Protocol are of paramount importance until such day that all States accept a total ban and all anti-personnel mines are destroyed. The rules of the amended Landmine Protocol will save lives and reduce or alleviate future landmine tragedies.

Let me also recall in this context the first success of the Review Conference, namely, the adoption in October 1995 of Protocol IV banning blinding laser weapons. The new Protocol prohibits the employment of laser weapons specifically designed to cause permanent blindness as well as the transfer of any such weapons to any State or non-State entity. This is a landmark event in the development of international humanitarian law. For the first time, a weapon developed and produced in prototype has been banned in a proactive way before it was even deployed. This, I submit, is the ideal way. States did not wait for the catastrophe to become a fact, as in the case of anti-personnel landmines; they preempted an inhumane weapon's development and banned it.

In conclusion, the first Review Conference made considerable progress through restrictions and partial prohibitions on landmines and through banning completely a new type of weapon.

Tomorrow, on 23 October at 11 a.m. in Conference Room 4, I will chair an informal meeting to discuss the amended Protocol II and the new Protocol IV and to provide a legal analysis of them with a view to facilitating the ratification process for States. The meeting will hear a panel of experts from the Russian Federation, South Africa and the United States, as well as from the United Nations Office of Legal Affairs and the International Committee of the Red Cross. You are all cordially invited to participate.

Mr. Ople (Philippines): Mr. Chairman, please allow me to express on behalf of the Philippine delegation our congratulations on your election to preside over the First Committee. As we pledge our full cooperation to you and your fellow officers, we would also like to express our confidence that the work of our Committee will benefit greatly under your wise leadership. Please allow me also to express my delegation's deep appreciation and respect for your predecessor, Ambassador Erdenechuluun of Mongolia.

Events in recent years show a clear momentum in favour of disarmament, particularly nuclear disarmament. To our credit, and to the credit of the United Nations, many of these developments were conceived or spurred on by our Committee. Much can also be attributed to the principled advocacy of the countries members of the Non-Aligned Movement. The Non-Aligned Movement's vigilance, determination and perseverance have served to ensure that disarmament remains a global priority and that specific disarmament issues are addressed seriously and earnestly.

A Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is in place. Nuclear-weapon-free zones exist all over the globe and are on the verge of consolidation. A clear legal obligation has been identified by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and erected to buttress the overwhelming political will of States to eliminate nuclear weapons. The nuclear non-proliferation regime has been extended indefinitely. In one part of the world, whole arsenals of nuclear weapons have been dismantled, while in another part of the world, potential nuclear proliferation has been averted.

The Chemical Weapons Convention is about to enter into force. Moves are being made to strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention. States have strengthened the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. There are moves and initiatives towards a total ban on landmines. The illicit transfer of small arms is also being addressed. Preparations are being made for the United Nations to devote a special session of the General Assembly to disarmament.

Many of these moves were not thought to be possible just a few years ago. The relative equilibrium brought about by the cold war caused the world to rely more on a stability based on terror than on a peace based on free will. Today, we have before us the blossoming of our collective aspirations.

Nevertheless, those developments, historic though they may be, suffer from flaws created by partisan politics and the refusal to abandon cold-war values. Although there is much cause for optimism, there is also cause for concern.

Potential and actual conflicts continue to beset us. While the possibility that nuclear weapons might be employed in these conflicts has been greatly reduced, the toll in lives, material costs and lost opportunities for progress and prosperity continue and can never be acceptable.

National and regional resources are consumed not only by actual conflicts but by the insecurity and instability caused by the continuing threat of weapons of mass destruction and the unregulated movement and use of conventional weapons, particularly those that are indiscriminate in character. Massive resources continue to be devoted to weapons of war at levels that clearly go beyond the need of States to defend themselves.

In my region, where cold war tensions once reigned supreme, we have established a nuclear-weapon-free zone. There was a time when this would not have been possible. In 1991, the Philippine Senate rejected the agreement that would have allowed the biggest overseas United States military facilities to continue to remain in our country. In so doing, we removed the final obstacle for negotiations to begin in the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) for a South-East Asia nuclear-weapon-free zone. Four years later, the gathered heads of the ASEAN nations and their counterparts from the rest of South-East Asia signed in Bangkok a Treaty that announced to the world the determination of the countries of South-East Asia to be free from nuclear weapons.

Our colleagues from the other nuclear-weapon-free zones welcomed the Bangkok Treaty, as did other countries. But some have questioned it. The States parties to the Bangkok Treaty are, in all sincerity, trying to work out their differences with those States. We are committed, however, truly to freeing ourselves of nuclear weapons.

Today, we are faced with the challenge of linking the nuclear-weapon-free zones that cover large parts of the globe. We support the suggestion of Brazil that we work out means by which the nuclear-weapon-free zones of the world can coordinate and work together for a nuclear-weapon-free southern hemisphere and adjacent areas.

While the ICJ has come up with welcome pronouncements on obligations to negotiate nuclear-disarmament agreements, it has issued a controversial Opinion on the issue of the legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons. The Court's Opinion on this point is so general that it could actually apply to any number of non-conventional and conventional weapons. The Philippines, together with several other nations, presented its position before the Court. We saw the overwhelming merit of the many arguments presented by other States in favour of the illegality of the threat and use of nuclear weapons. The Philippines hopes that the Court's Opinion will not result in a never-ending debate over legal interpretations, in our Committee or elsewhere. Rather, we

would like to focus on the Court's unanimous ruling that there exists the obligation not only to begin, but also to conclude, negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective control.

We are on the verge of establishing the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, which will be primarily responsible for monitoring compliance with the CTBT. The CTBT suffers from a serious flaw, since it allows the improvement of nuclear arsenals and related technologies through computer simulations and laboratory testing. It fails to address the question of nuclear disarmament, and its entry-into-force provision is also a cause for concern. However, the Philippines places great stock in the Treaty. We see it as a beginning, rather than an end in itself, and as an important political and legal step on the part of the declared nuclear-weapon States towards meeting calls for nuclear disarmament. Once the Treaty comes before the Philippine Senate for ratification, I am confident that we shall look upon it with favour.

There is merit on both sides of the nuclear non-proliferation debate. Gross inequities exist in our nuclear-weapons world, but extreme dangers exist as well. Thus, efforts must continue to make the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) truly universal by bringing in the few countries that still remain outside it. The NPT and its indefinite extension are products of historic compromises, with certain burdens placed on the nuclear-weapon States. They must continue to be sincere in their commitments. For it is their good faith, first and foremost, that can make universal acceptance of the NPT a reality. Among those commitments is the willingness to ban the production of fissile materials for weapons purposes. The Conference on Disarmament must now produce a document banning the further production of fissile material, a document to which the nuclear-weapon States can adhere.

The issue of security assurances for the non-nuclear States has been before us now for almost three decades and has not lost its relevance. The Philippines views this issue not simply as one in which the non-nuclear States care only for their own safety from nuclear harm — a faulty premise to begin with — but rather as another means of creating the political and legal conditions under which nuclear disarmament can be achieved. We welcome the fact that China and Russia agree with the Non-Aligned Movement on this issue and hope that we in the First Committee, as well as the Conference on Disarmament, can work towards an instrument binding nuclear-weapon States to provide a uniform guarantee.

The opening for signature of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction in 1993 was not only a major step towards the elimination of these dreadful weapons, but also a powerful symbol of the end of the cold war. It proved that the world wanted to take a step back and away from the insanity of bipolar confrontation. In this context, it would be ironic if the United States and Russia, which possess the largest stockpiles of these deadly concoctions, fail to become part of this global pact. As we wait for the Chemical Weapons Convention to enter into force, and as we prepare to implement it, through next year's first meeting of the States parties, we must make sure that there will be no discrimination in its implementation.

There have been many new developments since the conclusion in 1972 of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction. Technology for the production of these weapons has improved. But there have also been improvements in the commitment and capacity of States to deal with weapons of mass destruction. In this regard, my country supports the work of the Ad Hoc Group established by the Special Conference of the States Parties to the Convention in 1994 to find ways to strengthen the Convention through a compliance protocol. This compliance protocol should also include measures to address the danger posed by the possible use of this weapon by terrorist and criminal elements.

Threats to the well-being and prosperity of human beings come in forms other than nuclear, chemical and national conflicts, and violate the dignity of life. Landmines and similar insidious devices are a matter of grave concern for all people. The Philippines has declared a total ban on landmines. Although for a time the Philippines had landmines in its arsenal, these were never deployed. Very early on, my Government recognized the sheer inhumanity and indiscriminate nature of this weapon. To put teeth behind this, and to show how seriously we view the issue, the Department of Foreign Affairs of my country is preparing legislation that will criminalize the use or possession of, or trade in, landmines in the Philippines.

The Philippines is in favour of a total international ban on landmines. We support the initiatives of the United States and Canada in creating an international agreement

totally banning them. While we give our full support to this initiative, the Philippines joins many others in expressing the hope that attention will also continue to be focused on landmine clearance and assisting landmine victims.

We welcome the strengthening of Protocol II of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or To Have Indiscriminate Effects. We support moves towards the establishment of an international landmines register. But we would like to point out that when we begin the process of negotiating a total ban, these measures should not in any way be invoked to legitimize the use of even the most "innocuous" landmines or to delay negotiations.

The illicit transfer of small arms also poses a serious threat to stability, particularly in the context of internal conflicts, terrorism and criminal organizations. We continue to participate in and support arms transparency measures, as well as those that prohibit the illicit transfer of arms. In particular, we support the continued study and monitoring of this issue, whether through a group of Government experts or through a report by the Secretary-General.

As I said earlier, the pace of our work to rid the world of nuclear weapons has picked up. We must remain firm and committed to this end. Much more remains to be done, and we should avoid slowing our momentum or being distracted by those who use other disarmament issues to do so — although, ironically, such issues may be equally important. These issues should not be used for partisan political objectives or to distract the attention of the world from nuclear disarmament.

The Philippines views disarmament as one of two important means of achieving meaningful peace. The other is peaceful dialogue, together with efforts to build confidence, trust and greater understanding. The world has seen a similar momentum in this regard. In my region, on an official, ministerial level, we have established the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Forum. On another, informal, level we have informal forums for discussions on the South China Sea. We are also witnessing throughout the region an increase in academic forums to discuss security. One forum deserves particular attention, having contributed to greater security and political understanding in my region: the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific.

It is time to build on what we have achieved and work for a phased programme of progressive and deep reductions in nuclear arsenals with the ultimate aim of their total elimination; and we must do so within a time-bound framework. We must continue on the road to nuclear disarmament, taking on more challenges in other disarmament fields as necessary, but we should never waver in our task of removing once and for all these weapons of unimaginable destruction.

Armaments are obtained on the basis of perceived notions of security. Arsenals are built to defend against enemies. But the enemy consists not so much of one State that has an outstanding issue of a conflicting claim with another State. The enemy is misunderstanding; the enemy is lack of confidence; the enemy is mistrust. These are enemies that are not defeated by force of arms. On the contrary, these are enemies that can only be conquered by putting our collective will behind the task of achieving true and meaningful disarmament.

Mr. Larraín (Chile) (*interpretation from Spanish*): At the outset I should like to express to you, Mr. Chairman, the warm congratulations of my delegation on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee during this fifty-first session of the General Assembly. We are confident that your vast diplomatic experience will make it possible for our deliberations to be very fruitful. Please also convey our congratulations to the other members of the Bureau. I should also like, Sir, to pay tribute to the important and sensitive work done by your predecessor, Ambassador Erdenechuluun of Mongolia, and for the efficient support that we have consistently received from the Secretariat.

We can say with satisfaction that 1996 has been a year of exceptional achievements for Chile in the sphere of disarmament. First, together with more than 120 States, we joined in signing a universal convention of historic significance: the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. That instrument enshrines a definitive ban on nuclear explosions — a priority goal of Chile's foreign policy, in the attainment of which my country, with other American nations and other countries in the southern hemisphere, worked tirelessly over a period of several decades.

Chile's commitment to this Treaty, whose shortcomings and imperfections we have pointed out, and which we consider to be simply one further step along the road towards nuclear disarmament, is clear, as is evidenced by our active participation in the International Monitoring System, which will be the backbone of the CTBT

verification regime. Chile will be contributing with a network of six stations located on its continental territory, on Easter Island and on Juan Fernández Island, which will make possible systematic monitoring of the vast Pacific-Antarctic quadrant lying off our coasts.

As the representative of Chile to the Conference on Disarmament said, for our country, which is a State party to the Antarctic Treaty, the Treaty of Tlatelolco and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the CTBT will add only the obligation not to conduct, encourage or participate in nuclear tests in non-jurisdictional areas. However, Chile believes that this obligation already exists for the entire community of nations as a matter of customary international law.

Accordingly, we believe that it is essential for all States that have already signed the CTBT, including the five nuclear-weapon States, to assume a firm commitment to act in consonance with the purpose of the Treaty immediately and throughout the period leading to its entry into force. Similarly, Chile believes that the Conference on Disarmament should immediately begin negotiations on a cut-off treaty prohibiting the production of fissionable material for military purposes.

Secondly, Chile ratified the Chemical Weapons Convention, an instrument that has been hailed as the first genuine disarmament Treaty inasmuch as it prohibits an entire category of weapons of mass destruction and provides for the elimination of existing arsenals. In so doing, Chile reaffirmed its will, together with Argentina and Brazil, in the Mendoza Accord, signed in September 1991 and subsequently adhered to by Uruguay, not to develop, produce, acquire, stockpile, retain, directly or indirectly transfer or use chemical or biological weapons. It is therefore a source of concern for Chile and the 64 countries that to date have deposited their instruments of ratification on the Chemical Weapons Convention that the two States possessing the largest chemical-weapons arsenals, the United States of America and the Russian Federation, have not yet ratified this instrument, which was conceived and drafted as a disarmament instrument and not simply a non-proliferation instrument.

There is no doubt that this delay harms not just the credibility of the Convention but also that of the forum in which it was negotiated and the principal actors whose prior agreement made it possible. Chile believes that it is timely and appropriate for the General Assembly to send strong signals of encouragement to both States to manifest their oft-proclaimed political will to become parties to the Convention prompt by ratifying it promptly.

Thirdly, on 17 June, Chile, together with 22 other States, was admitted as a member of the Conference on Disarmament, which we interpret as recognition of our vigorous and active promotion of international security through the encouragement of mutual trust, cooperation and support for forums, negotiations and instruments of disarmament.

All of these expressions of my country's commitment to disarmament are part of the broad vision of the need for peace and security, which, as the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Chile said to the General Assembly, require parallel action in the fields of social development, democracy and the promotion of human rights. The strategy of outward growth being implemented by many developing States, including Chile, also determines the internationalization of their economic and financial structures. As a result, borders have become more economic than physical and the economy has been internationalized to such an extent that no country can escape the effects of the destabilization that all conflicts produce.

In this way, the concepts of economic and international security have become closely linked. International stability has emerged as a precondition for equitable economic growth, which in turn is an essential aspect of internal stability and hence the consolidation and development of democracy and full respect for human rights. A more secure and stable world therefore would be one in which all States are prepared to assume a growing share of responsibility and sacrifice. With regard to this latter dimension, we must accept the challenge of the greater intrusiveness of truly effective verification mechanisms. Chile has accepted that challenge through its support of Programme "93+2" to enhance the International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards mechanisms and through active participation in the preparations for the fourth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction that is to take place in Geneva at the end of November. The main purpose of that Conference should be to endow that Treaty with a verification regime comparable to that which makes the Chemical Weapons Convention the revolutionary instrument that it is. Moreover, my country attaches particular importance to the fourth special session of the General

Assembly devoted to disarmament because of its positive impact on the agenda for disarmament.

In the regional sphere, in which we have seen considerable advances in the last decade in terms of détente and confidence-building, Chile continues pursuing efforts to implement the Santiago Declaration of November 1995. In addition to the regular holding of meetings between the military Chiefs of Staff of Chile and Peru, we established last May, a standing committee for Chilean and Argentine security, conceived as a forum for dialogue on security matters through which the Governments of Argentina and Chile seek to achieve a qualitative correlation between the political and economic dimensions of their bilateral relations, which over the past seven years have made advances that I would not hesitate to qualify as vital for peace and stability in the southern cone of America.

Chile shares the international concern for the immense damage caused by anti-personnel landmines, which we consider excessively injurious and indiscriminate. Not only have we suspended for more than 10 years their production and export; we have also contributed to the efforts of the international community to clear mines over extensive rural areas of Central America, which until recently was the theatre of domestic conflicts having cross-border effects.

Finally, as a Party to the Antarctic Treaty and the Treaty of Tlatelolco, and welcoming the recent signing of the Pelindaba Treaty and of the Protocols to the Treaty of Rarotonga by the nuclear-weapon States, we wish to announce our strong support for the initiatives of Brazil and New Zealand to establish the entire southern hemisphere and adjacent areas as nuclear-weapon-free zones.

It is fashionable to talk about the new positive conditions brought about by the end of the cold war, as if those conditions were automatically capable of bringing about greater international security. However, one only needs to take a glance at current regional or national conflicts with cross-border effects to see that the community of nations, and in particular the United Nations, cannot let down its guard and must continue to give impetus to a disarmament agenda, that by its very nature can never be too ambitious. The delegation of Chile commits its efforts and capacities to that end.

Mr. Calovski (Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia): May I begin my statement by expressing the great satisfaction of my delegation at seeing you, Sir, elected Chairman of the First Committee of the General Assembly. You can count on my delegation's full support and cooperation in your endeavours to bring the Committee's deliberations to a successful conclusion. I should also like to take this opportunity to congratulate the other members of the Bureau on their election to their high posts.

At this as in prior sessions, the Committee will discuss the most current problems in the field of international security and disarmament; now, however, the international situation and the priorities of the States Members of the United Nations are different. The regional and global security agendas, in particular the priorities whose aim is the strengthening of international security, are changing constantly. The reason for this is, plainly speaking, that the character, quantity and weight of threats to international peace and security are changing, too.

The incentives for a policy in favour of strengthening international peace, progress and development are changing at the same time. We are seeing many changes in the development of many regions and countries, but the dangers of instability and the threats to peaceful development and to international peace and security are resistant to change. We see them every day on television screens.

It is not necessary to stress that the ordinary man or woman is not preoccupied with the possibility of the eruption of nuclear war or nuclear catastrophe. It is understood that such a threat to international peace and to peaceful development has been overcome; but, as I have already mentioned, threats and the roots of instability have not been eliminated. The progress of the disarmament process and its contribution to the strengthening of international security should therefore be the result of our Committee's deliberations this year.

The process of disarmament, which must continue, is not a technical affair nor an aim in itself. It is a very weighty political and security affair very closely linked with all aspects of international development and cooperation. Its main function is the strengthening of international security and stability. It is in total opposition to all forces, internal and foreign, that do not observe the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations and international law and do not strictly abide by the principles of non-interference in the internal affairs of others and of mutual respect and the observance of interdependence.

Therefore, when we discuss this or that aspect of nuclear arms, other arms of mass destruction, conventional weapons and so on, we have to keep constantly in mind the

function of the activity we are going to undertake and pursue and the extent to which it makes the world, its regions and its countries more stable and more secure. The discussions on the banning of anti-personnel landmines are a very good example for the deliberations on all subjects on the disarmament agenda.

In short, the process of disarmament should be brought closer to ordinary men and women and should become the true interest of all Members of the United Nations, whatever their size. All countries, big or small, should be equally interested in preserving their security and in benefiting from international cooperation. The starting point in that should be the defence of their country. It is legitimate to possess arms for the purposes of national defence. The possession of more arms than are reasonably necessary for the defence of the country is a problem and a concern for other countries, particularly neighbouring ones. Plainly speaking, it creates security problems for the other countries, particularly, as I said, for the neighbouring ones. This problem can be overcome through the development of international cooperation and by undertaking various confidence-building measures, bilateral or multilateral, and pursuing transparent defence policies and activities with concrete measures in the context of current disarmament efforts.

The role of good-neighbourliness in all this is crucial. The General Assembly at its fiftieth session adopted a basic resolution of immense regional and global importance for the development of good-neighbourly relations among Balkan States. It is very important that it was co-sponsored by the Balkan States, all the members of the European Union and other European countries. I would like to stress with great satisfaction that some of the basic aims of resolution 50/80 B are already being implemented.

The war in Bosnia and Herzegovina ended with the conclusion of the Dayton Peace Agreement, but the work is far from done. The Dayton peace process needs a lot of internal and international support in order to become a process of development.

As far as my country, the Republic of Macedonia, is concerned, we are pleased to have normalized our relations with all States of the former Yugoslavia and with all our neighbours. We have established diplomatic relations and are developing beneficial cooperation with all of them, in accordance with the provisions of resolution 50/80 B. In accordance with our foreign policy of open borders and equality — and taking advantage of our geostrategic position as a central State in the Balkans — we are becoming an important place for the development of international cooperation in all of south-eastern Europe.

Although it was the cradle of European civilization, due to historical reasons our region has found itself on the margins of the development of European integration in the past few years. All the countries of our region are presently endeavouring to become members of the European Union and of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization as soon as possible. That direction is followed by my country as well; were it not pursued, the region would unavoidably face a situation in which there would be no development, but in which there would exist many unresolved security problems.

The General Assembly — on the proposal of this Committee and through the initiative of my delegation — requested through resolutions 50/80 B and 48/84 B the undertaking of measures and preventive activities aimed at the creation of a stable zone of peace and cooperation in the Balkans by the year 2000. This Committee will deliberate on this subject at the fifty-second session of the General Assembly next year on the basis of the Secretary-General's report, which was requested by these resolutions. We hope that the Secretariat will prepare a truly interesting and useful report in the spirit of these resolutions, one that will be creative and analytical in substance and will be focused on the only alternative available to the region: its Europeanization, its European future.

As I am mentioning the Europeanization of the Balkans, I would like to stress the importance of the very useful reply of the European Union and of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe associated with it — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Romania — to the request in resolution 50/80 B for the development of good-neighbourly relations among Balkan States, which is contained in document A/51/376 of 19 September 1996. This very important document states that

> "A European perspective for the Balkans is therefore the best chance we have to heal the wounds of these years and fully reintegrate the area in the life of Europe, its political and social standards." *(A/51/376, para. 11)*

One very important aspect of international security and disarmament is the undertaking of preventive measures with the aim of not endangering international peace and security; reducing the quality of nuclear arsenals and eventually eliminating them; banning the production, stockpiling and

use of chemical and bacteriological weapons; securing full transparency with regard to conventional weapons and their production, stockpiling and trade; banning anti-personnel mines; and so on.

In all that, however, activities on the regional and global levels to prevent the eruption of armed conflicts — crises that could quickly turn into wars — are very important. Today there are no armed conflicts without international implications. In the future this will be even more true.

All violent conflicts are becoming concerns and problems for the international community and the United Nations. The statement by the representative of the International Committee of the Red Cross on the need to observe and develop further international humanitarian law was illustrative of this. The value of one person's life is much higher than that of many guns.

We should be clear, with regard to the disarmament process, about the fact that violent conflicts are generating huge needs for arms. Instead of pursuing disarmament, we will be facing armament as a result of violent conflicts. The dimensions of this danger are much greater in the light of our knowledge that, in a crisis situation, many arms fall into the hands of illegal military formations, terrorist groups and individuals.

As they face the potential eruption of future violent conflicts that seriously threaten international peace and security, the international community, the United Nations and international organizations for security and cooperation such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe should act to prevent them. It is therefore necessary to undertake measures against all activities aimed at fomenting crises, chaos and the disintegration of States. At the same time, it is necessary to give maximum priority and support to all activities whose aim is the development of a world without violence and a true system of global security.

I would like to inform the Committee that, last week in Skopje, the capital city of my country, an international seminar took place. Its subject was "*Agenda of preventive diplomacy: Theory and practice*". It was organized by the United Nations and my Government and sponsored by various other countries. The President of the Republic of Macedonia, Kiro Gligorov, together with many other prominent officials and competent academicians, took part in the seminar. Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali sent an interesting message to the participants of the seminar. In it, he stressed, among other things, that the best result of diplomacy is the reduction of tension before it turns into conflict. In his opinion, that is not always possible, but it is better to prevent the eruption of conflicts through early warnings, quiet diplomacy and, if necessary, the preventive deployment of peace forces, than to act after the eruption of conflict. It would be useful if the Secretariat were to distribute the documents from this seminar to the First Committee.

The maintenance of international security and, in that context, the prevention of the violent disintegration of States, bearing in mind what is happening and what could happen in the future, is a subject which requires responsible, competent and organized deliberation in the First Committee. The prevention of the violent disintegration of States, which could pose a very serious threat to international peace and security in the future, will generate huge, real — I stress the word "real" — results in the disarmament process and a vast quantity of arms will thus become unnecessary.

That effort will likewise generate positive attitudes in all fields of international cooperation and in the internal development of States, particularly since that effort requires the democratic development of society and the observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion. It also requires the observance of international law in international cooperation and the practice of good-neighbourliness for the solution of unresolved questions.

We believe that an active approach by the General Assembly against the eruption of conflicts, particularly against the violent disintegration of States, is a true need for our Organization.

In view of all this, my delegation is working on a draft resolution by which the General Assembly will decide to discuss the subject of the maintenance of international security and the prevention of violent disintegration of States at its fifty-third session. We believe that this effort by the General Assembly will make an important contribution to the enhancement of international peace and security and to the economic and social advancement of all peoples. It will be a significant step towards real disarmament and the reduction of the present huge quantities of armaments. The nature of the draft resolution we intend to present will be a procedural one, without financial implications, to be adopted by consensus.

Efforts to meet last year's General Assembly call to complete the work on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), with a view to its signature at the beginning of this year's session, were dominant on this year's disarmament agenda. With some difficulty, this was done. My delegation was a sponsor of the relevant resolution. In the next few days, we are going to sign the Treaty and we will encourage our Parliament to ratify it as soon as possible.

The fact is that we have achieved very important results in the disarmament process that are beneficial to nuclear and non-nuclear-weapon States alike. All five nuclear-weapon States have adopted the Treaty. The most important thing for the non-nuclear-weapon States is the spirit — and I stress the word "spirit" — of the CTBT. This spirit is without doubt in favour of the position that no one should possess nuclear arms in the future.

The efforts to see the Chemical Weapons Convention enter into force and to give teeth to the Biological Weapons Convention should receive our utmost attention. The efforts of my delegation in this area will not be lacking here or in other international forums.

My delegation will, in following tradition, give the highest attention to our work in the field of conventional armaments, particularly because in my country's region the quantity of armaments is way beyond that necessary for defence purposes and because of the existence of various unresolved problems among States. It is very important to continue to insist on the transparency of the production, stockpiling and trade of these armaments. The region would be much more secure if all States were aware of the present situation of conventional weapons in our region. The lack of awareness creates suspicions that could result in the undertaking of activities contrary to the development of good-neighbourly relations.

Last year, my delegation was a sponsor of the resolution on small arms. We are pleased that it generated much interest and numerous activities. The process of micro-disarmament deserves maximum attention and we are convinced that we will be able to show concrete results in the future. Mali, for example, deserves full recognition.

In the coming period, everything possible should be done with regard to the banning of anti-personal landmines. We would like to congratulate Canada for its initiative. We nevertheless think that priority should be given to the de-mining process. The remarks of the representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina some days ago were quite convincing. The large number of landmines planted in many parts of the world should be removed. Most of the countries in which landmines were planted are victims of past conflicts and are unable to do the de-mining by themselves. The international community should therefore help them and should participate in the de-mining.

Before I conclude my statement, I take great satisfaction in underlining the fact that the entire southern hemisphere of our planet has been embraced by a nuclear-weapon-free zone. This development has been positively assessed by all nuclear States. I hope that future efforts in this direction will enjoy as much success.

As I mentioned at the beginning of my statement, our Committee will be quite busy in the days to come. My delegation will endeavour to make its own contribution.

Mr. Hasan (Bahrain) (*interpretation from Arabic*): Allow me at the outset to extend to you, Sir, on behalf of my delegation, our sincere congratulations on your unanimous election to the chairmanship of this Committee. We trust that your experience and diplomatic skills will contribute effectively to the successful outcome of our work. I should also like to pay tribute to your predecessor, Ambassador Erdenechuluun, for his able stewardship of this Committee at the fiftieth session.

With the end of the cold war, a new, inchoate international order emerged. We note with satisfaction that over the past two years some important developments have taken place in this newly relaxed international arena. While certain outstanding issues have been resolved, new challenges have emerged at the regional and international levels. These new challenges must be addressed.

Following long and arduous negotiations, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty was adopted by the General Assembly on 10 September 1996, in resolution 50/245. One hundred and twenty-five countries have signed and one has ratified the Treaty since it was opened for signature on 24 September, inspiring new hope that humanity may fulfil its dream of the total elimination of nuclear weapons and their evils.

It is regrettable, however, that the Treaty did not set a specific time-frame or contain a solemn pledge to dismantle all of these weapons. However, as the efforts of the international community since the late 1950s have borne fruit in this Treaty, there is cause for optimism that, with persistent effort, this noble goal will be reached one day.

Almost a year and a half has now elapsed since the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Yet, 25 years after its entry into force, this Treaty is still not universally accepted. Here, we would appeal to all States that have not yet joined this Treaty to do so.

Israel's refusal to accede to the NPT and to subject its nuclear installations to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards regime has destabilized and threatened regional security in the Middle East and diminished the international character of the Treaty. It is in fact a serious impediment to the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region. Israel's persistence in pursuing its nuclear programme and in developing its delivery systems defies the will of the international community on this matter, despite repeated calls by the General Assembly through a series of resolutions since 1974 — the most recent of which was resolution 50/66 — despite Security Council resolution 487 (1981) and despite decisions by other international conferences — most recently the resolution on the Middle East adopted by the Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the NPT. That resolution noted with concern the existence in the Middle East of unsafeguarded nuclear facilities, and called on all States of the region that have not yet done so to accede to the Treaty as soon as possible and to place their nuclear facilities under IAEA safeguards. This is a prerequisite for serious efforts to make the Middle East region a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. Ultimately, such a zone would be the best guarantee for establishing a just, lasting and comprehensive peace, free of the nuclear weapons that are a source of terror and intimidation to all States in the region.

We believe that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones consolidates both regional and global security. To that end, the States of a given region must reach mutually agreed arrangements in which they recognize the general principles of international law and the norms of international behaviour. Such recognition would make a valuable contribution to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, but would not be a substitute for full accession to the NPT, which remains the cornerstone of the international nuclear non-proliferation system.

Security Council resolution 984 (1995) on security assurances to non-nuclear weapon States against nuclear weapons gives us hope for a future Treaty that will guarantee the sovereignty and independence of non-nuclear-weapon States and ensure that the nuclear-weapon States will desist from the use or threat of use of such weapons.

In this context, we underscore the importance of the Advisory Opinion issued by the International Court of Justice on 8 July last, despite the fact that it was inconclusive on the legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons. That Opinion nonetheless confirmed the pledges of the nuclear-weapon States to pursue in good faith negotiations towards reaching effective arrangements to eliminate such weapons.

The Convention on Chemical Weapons is about to enter into force, more than three years after its opening for signature. It is regrettable that non-ratification by the two States that possess the largest stockpiles of such weapons should foil the hopes and aspirations generated when the Treaty was opened for signature. It is our hope that these two States will soon take the correct and necessary steps in this direction.

The illicit transfer and use of conventional weapons and small arms, including ammunition, explosives and related materials, and the illicit trafficking in and possession of such weapons, are causes for serious concern for us, especially when such *matériel* falls into the hands of groups that have no respect for human life or for the right of every human being to live in peace and security. While we express our commitment to General Assembly resolution 49/75 M, adopted on 15 December 1994 and entitled "Measures to curb the illicit transfer and use of conventional arms", we support the effort undertaken by the United Nations Disarmament Commission to develop the necessary guidelines for implementing concrete measures that would prevent the delivery of arms and explosives to those who use such *matériel* for destabilizing Governments and to spread violence and terrorism in their societies, with serious implications for national and regional security. It might be appropriate at this point to work towards concluding an international agreement to prohibit illicit trade in such weapons.

Anti-personnel landmines constitute a grave threat to the life of innocent human beings. Their potential harmful effects can last for many years in the areas in which they are planted. Clearing them requires enormous financial resources and concerted international action. In this regard, we support efforts aimed at mobilizing the international community in order to make progress on a legally binding and verifiable international agreement that imposes a total ban on the use, production and export of landmines. We commend the efforts made by some States to institute

unilateral bans on the production and export of these weapons, and we commend and express our appreciation to the Canadian Government for hosting the international Conference on landmines held in Ottawa from 3 to 5 October 1996.

In this context, the State of Bahrain supports the convening of a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. In the course of the preparatory work to that effect, a specific agenda for disarmament that covers the period ahead must be developed.

Reinforcement of confidence-building measures among States; adherence to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and the rule of international law; respect for the sovereignty and independence of States and their political systems, and non-interference in their domestic affairs; peaceful settlement of disputes through negotiations: combined, these constitute a sound foundation for a world free of war, a world in which peace, security and harmony prevail. The State of Bahrain, which is fully committed to these principles, hopes to gain the international community's support for its candidacy for membership of the Security Council for the period 1998-99, during the next session of the General Assembly. We pledge to contribute effectively to the promotion of global peace and security.

Mr. Koirala (Nepal): My delegation offers you, Sir, warm congratulations on your election as Chairman of this important Committee and assures you of its fullest cooperation. We also congratulate other members of the Bureau. I should like also to thank the former Chairman, Ambassador Erdenechuluun of Mongolia.

The Committee is meeting at a time when the climate for international peace and security remains positive. Last year, we saw the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) extended indefinitely. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) was adopted and opened for signature last month. We believe that these events have brought us another step closer to our dream of a nuclear-weapon-free world. In addition, my country, Nepal, signed the Treaty, demonstrating once again its commitment to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The Chemical Weapons Convention is about to come into force. Earnest attempts to strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention are under way. Similarly, international support for halting the production, use and transfer of conventional weapons and anti-personnel landmines continues to grow. Taken together, these events reflect the determination of international community to achieve general and complete disarmament.

The CTBT is not an end in itself. The international community has to travel much farther. During the post-CTBT period both the nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon States should act with increased responsibility in order to translate into reality our commitment under article VI of the NPT. The logical step, in our view, should therefore be to start negotiations on a treaty on the elimination of nuclear weapons in a reasonable and agreed time-frame. If the international community can agree to conclude legally binding Conventions on chemical and biological weapons, there is no reason why a treaty on the elimination of nuclear weapons cannot be concluded as well.

The conclusion of such a treaty has become all the more important in the light of the recent advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice. The Court unanimously ruled that

> "There exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control." (*A/51/4, para. 182*)

My delegation believes that the adoption of a treaty on a time-bound elimination of nuclear weapons is possible. We hope that the necessary steps in this direction will be taken, particularly by the nuclear-weapon States. In this context, the programme of action for the phased reduction of nuclear weapons proposed by 28 Non-Aligned Movement and neutral countries can form an important framework. The programme of action, to which my country has already given its support, offers a wide range of options for the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons from the face of the earth. We believe also that it is legitimate to demand a legally binding commitment by the nuclear-weapon States not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States. Of equal importance in this field is the conclusion of a treaty banning the production of fissile materials for use in nuclear weapons. My delegation therefore joins its voice to the call for an immediate resumption of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty in the Conference on Disarmament in order to keep the momentum of the nuclear disarmament process going.

The devastating and indiscriminate killing power of other weapons of mass destruction is a matter of continuing concern. The international community must give equal attention to the elimination of such weapons. I mentioned

earlier that the Chemical Weapons Convention is on the verge of entering into force. That Convention is an effective example of how a whole range of weapons of mass destruction can be eliminated. We are encouraged by the international attention this Convention has received; however, we believe, as do others, that the Convention will be more effective when it is ratified by the major chemical-weapon Powers. We hope and are confident that the coming days will see our aspiration become reality.

Together with weapons of mass destruction, conventional weapons continue to pose a threat to international peace and security. This category of weapons has, more than any other, caused untold deaths and misery throughout history. The illicit trafficking in such weapons has added fuel to the conflicts in many regions of the world. Nepal therefore supports measures geared towards stemming the illicit trafficking in such arms, through bilateral, regional and international cooperation. We welcome in this regard the adoption by the United Nations Disarmament Commission of guidelines for international arms transfers, with particular reference to illicit trafficking in arms. Also, Nepal, as always, extends its support to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. A continuing participant in the Register, Nepal urges other countries to join it as soon as possible.

As regards the scourge of anti-personnel landmines, my delegation shares the universal concern expressed by representatives. Nepal is committed to a total ban on such landmines, which continue not only to kill and mutilate thousands of innocent civilians, but also to hinder the economic and social reconstruction of the regions affected. Therefore, we fully support a treaty banning the production, stockpiling, use and transfer of anti-personnel landmines for all time.

Nuclear-weapon-free zones, in our view, contribute greatly to the process of global disarmament and non-proliferation. Nepal therefore salutes the people of Africa, South-East Asia, Latin America and the South Pacific region, who have come a long way in agreeing to make their respective regions nuclear-weapon-free zones. We are confident that the coming years will see such zones extend to more and more regions and subregions of the world. We earnestly hope that our efforts to establish such nuclear-weapon-free zones in our region of South Asia and in the Middle East will one day be blessed with success. The establishment and consolidation of nuclear-weapon-free zones provide a strong impetus to the international community to further devote itself to the goal of ridding the world of nuclear weapons. In this regard, we welcome the support of the nuclear-weapon States for these important regional confidence-building efforts.

Lack of mutual trust has a great deal to do with the prevailing conflicts in many parts of the world. It is in this context that initiatives for confidence-building become important. Such measures, we believe, help build confidence among people by dispelling persistent mistrust. The United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, known as the Kathmandu Centre, stands to serve that very purpose. The Centre organizes seminars and conferences on topical issues of peace, security and disarmament, whose outcomes have proved to be of great value in the global disarmament campaign.

I wish to reaffirm my country's strong support for the Centre. We are ready to honour our commitment as host country in order to make it an essential promoter of dialogue on regional peace and disarmament in the Asia and Pacific region. I should like also to thank all the countries that have supported the Centre financially and to renew my appeal for greater voluntary contributions to maintain its financial health.

Mr. Hoffmann (Germany), Chairman of the Disarmament Commission: Allow me at the outset to congratulate you, Sir, on your election. I am pleased to see you in the Chair, ensuring the smooth functioning of the Committee.

In my capacity as the current Chairman of the United Nations Disarmament Commission, I have the honour to introduce the report (A/51/42) of the Commission for its 1996 session. As in previous years, the report consists of four chapters and annexes, containing the results of its deliberations on various disarmament items on the agenda during the 1996 substantive session. Chapter IV sets out the conclusions and reports of the subsidiary bodies, which duly reflect the status of the Commission's deliberations on various disarmament issues at the 1996 session.

The Disarmament Commission organized its 1996 session in accordance with the mandate set forth in paragraph 118 of the Final Document of the 1978 first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, as well as with the guidelines set by the reform programme entitled "Ways and means to enhance the functioning of the Disarmament Commission", which was unanimously adopted by the Commission in 1990.

It should be pointed out that for the 1996 substantive session, the Commission, at its organizational session, decided to include only two substantive items on its agenda. They are: first, "International arms transfers, with particular reference to General Assembly resolution 46/36 H of 6 December 1991"; and secondly, "Exchange of views on the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament". Two Working Groups were established to deal with these agenda items.

Working Group I, on the item regarding international arms transfers, was able to agree on a set of guidelines on the subject. All delegations hailed the successful conclusion of the guidelines, which were considered particularly timely given the current turbulent regional situation. The guidelines provide a programme of action for reducing licit arms transfers and eradicating illicit arms trafficking. They constitute a step in charting a new course for dealing with micro-disarmament in general. The text also establishes a balance between the legitimate right to acquire arms for self-defence and the potentially destabilizing consequences of arms transfers. The guidelines stress not only the importance of strict national legislative and administrative measures and the application of compatible standards among national systems, but also the important role that the United Nations can play in this field. They further recognize the equal responsibility of supplier and recipient countries. States receiving arms have the responsibility to ensure that their imports are commensurate with their legitimate self-defence and security requirements, and supplier States have the equal responsibility to ensure that their exports do not contribute to instability. A balance between the commercial dimension of arms transfers and the consideration of international security and regional stability also was emphasized in the guidelines.

Working Group II held an extensive exchange of views in a positive and constructive atmosphere on the question of convening a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD IV). The need to hold such a session to carry out a comprehensive review of progress in the post-cold-war era was generally recognized. Non-Aligned Movement countries advocated convening the session soon, in 1997 if possible, while the European Union and the United States stressed the importance of careful preparation and identification of the objectives to be achieved in order to ensure the success of SSOD IV.

With respect to the organization of work of the Commission in 1996, I am grateful to note that, with the cooperation of all delegations, the Commission was able to finalize procedural and organizational matters prior to the substantive session. In this regard, the pre-session consultations proved to be extremely useful and contributed greatly to the organization of the work of the Commission this year. Regrettably, however, as many delegations pointed out, the Commission failed to reach agreement on a third substantive item for the session.

Another organizational issue concerns the number of substantive agenda items for the 1997 session of the Commission. Since one of the two substantive items was concluded this year, proposals will have to be formulated for consideration at the forthcoming organizational session of the Commission in December. For this reason, a special consultation group has been set up under the chairmanship of Indonesia. Intensive consultations will therefore be required at this session of the General Assembly so that a final decision can be made at the Commission's organizational session.

Finally, I should not fail to express my gratitude to all delegations for their understanding and the businesslike manner in which they conducted the work of the Commission this year. Special tribute should be paid to the members of the Bureau of the Commission, in particular the eight Vice-Chairmen; the Rapporteur of the Commission, Mr. Rajab Sukayri of Jordan; and the Chairmen of the two Working Groups, namely, Mr. Gheorghe Chirila of Romania and Ambassador Luvsangiin Erdenechuluun of Mongolia, for their full cooperation and hard work in carrying out the tasks entrusted to them by the Commission. On behalf of the Commission, I also thank the staff of the Centre for Disarmament Affairs for their valuable assistance, and particularly the Director of the Centre, Mr. Prvoslav Davinic; the Secretary of the Disarmament Commission, Mr. Kuo-Chung Lin; and their colleagues who served as the secretaries of the two Working Groups. On behalf of the Commission, I express my sincere appreciation to all other members of the Secretariat who assisted the Commission in carrying out its task.

With this explanation, I present the annual report of the United Nations Disarmament Commission, as contained in document A/51/42.

The Chairman: The Committee takes note of the report of the Disarmament Commission.

Mr. Ovia (Papua New Guinea): As this is the first time that my delegation has spoken at this session, let me at the outset congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the

chairmanship of this Committee. My country is delighted to see you preside over this very important Committee at this session of the General Assembly, and I should like also to congratulate the other members of your Bureau. My delegation also wishes to convey, through you, our sincere gratitude and appreciation for the work of the former Chairman of this Committee, the Ambassador of Mongolia, who diligently guided the work of the Committee during the occasion of the United Nations fiftieth anniversary.

Despite the end of the cold war, international peace and security have not been fully achieved. My country firmly believes that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones at the regional level will build confidence and provide an opportunity for many non-nuclear-weapon States to continue to combat the proliferation of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. In this regard, Papua New Guinea welcomed the recent signing on 25 March 1996 of the relevant Protocols of the South Pacific Nuclear-Free Zone Treaty — the Treaty of Rarotonga — by nuclear Powers France, United Kingdom and the United States of America. Papua New Guinea believes that by doing so, these nuclear-weapon States have consciously agreed to stop all forms of nuclear testing, manufacturing and stockpiling, as well as the trans-shipment of nuclear wastes to and from the South Pacific region.

The conclusion of regional treaties around the globe is very impressive indeed. My country wishes to commend the good work represented by the Treaty of Tlatelolco for Latin America and the Caribbean, and we call on other regional groups to follow this example. Papua New Guinea also welcomes the signing in Cairo on 11 April 1996 of the Treaty of Pelindaba, establishing the African nuclear-weapon-free zone. The decision of nuclear-weapon States finally to cooperate in that region should be followed with visible programmes and actions aimed at eradicating the regional proliferation of nuclear weapons.

My delegation is also heartened by current developments in South-East Asia. The conclusion in December 1995 of negotiations on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty will further enhance peace and security in the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) region — a region with which my country is closely associated.

Papua New Guinea also welcomes the proposal of Brazil aimed at creating and regulating a nuclear-weapon free-zone in the southern hemisphere. Papua New Guinea strongly believes that the conclusion of this treaty will form an important foundation upon which the international community can build in order collectively to move towards attaining the objectives of nuclear disarmament and global peace and security.

Having read the records and heard the current debate on disarmament, which has progressed to new heights, we should, however, bear in mind that the dangers of past nuclear testing have not been adequately addressed. In this regard, my delegation would like to align itself with the statement made by the Ambassador of the Republic of the Marshall Islands. Papua New Guinea will continue to stress that a lot more work needs to be done properly to repair the damage caused by the nuclear-testing programmes of certain super-Powers. In the South Pacific region and in other regions of the world, there exist communities that to this day still suffer from exposure to nuclear radiation and other effects of nuclear testing. Most of these countries and their peoples will continue to live under severe conditions and to suffer grave diseases for a long time. For instance, the people of the Republic of the Marshall Islands continue to suffer from the effects of past nuclear-testing programmes. The nightmare still torments — and will continue to torment — innocent victims, including women and children. The nuclear-weapon States know as well as we do that the consequences of atomic radiation will have a long-lasting effect on human lives as well as on other biological life-forms and ecological formations of the once-peaceful region of the Pacific.

Similarly, the recent cessation of French nuclear testing in French Polynesia does not guarantee the people of Tahiti any assurances that they will live safely on the islands, as they had done for many generations. The impact on the seabed and coral reefs and the general disturbance and displacement of the marine ecosystem threatens the very livelihood of the people of these islands.

Many of us have signed the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). There is no better way to move forward than to request the nuclear-weapon Powers to embark on some serious and long-term reconstruction programmes. There is no point in applauding the progress of the CTBT while the socio-economic well-being of the victims of these awful practices remains in jeopardy. Papua New Guinea does not hesitate to call on the United States and France to reconsider and review their reconstruction programmes, as well as to establish new and effective mechanisms directly to address the concerns of the islanders. Long-term and appropriate compensation payments and remedies for these people are warranted due to the destruction of their very sources of subsistence and economic survival. A thorough clean-up of the old sites and

their constant and systematic monitoring in order to inform the inhabitants of any imminent dangers are only a few of the important areas requiring immediate cooperation.

Papua New Guinea, which signed the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) on 25 September 1996, was among the first 70 countries to do so. We concur, however, with the views expressed by India, Malaysia and Indonesia that the current framework of the CTBT critically fails to link the Treaty language with the universal objective of achieving complete and total disarmament within a given time-frame. We believe that the CTBT cannot be seen in isolation from the total overall goal of achieving the complete elimination of nuclear weapons.

The notion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty to us implies the total elimination of all nuclear tests, including atmospheric, underground, computer-simulated and outer-space testing, and a comprehensive clean-up operation after these tests. My Prime Minister raised these very concerns during his address to the plenary of the General Assembly. This issue was also cited by other speakers as a critical flaw in the Treaty.

Despite these limitations, Papua New Guinea co-sponsored the resolution on the CTBT when it was introduced in the General Assembly in order to maintain the momentum of, and confidence in, overall global disarmament efforts. A contrary action would have been a step backwards.

In this connection, my delegation supports the initiative taken by the Arab Republic of Egypt in drafting a resolution for consideration and adoption by the General Assembly that calls on the Conference on Disarmament to move forward with negotiations on a treaty for the elimination of all nuclear weapons.

Permit me to touch briefly on the recent advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons. The International Court of Justice, in an opinion that is considered historic and landmark, confirmed that the threat or use of nuclear weapons would violate international law. The court stressed that

> "There exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control." (*A/51/4, para. 182*)

It is very enlightening to note such foresight on the part of this highest legal authority. It is my country's firm conviction that the international community should adhere to the spirit and intent of this important opinion. Papua New Guinea is convinced that we should refrain from unnecessary legal polemics and go straight into the real business of eliminating all nuclear weapons.

The position of the International Court of Justice is very clear: There is an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control. Violations of these norms bypass the rules not only of customary international law but also of the Geneva and Hague Conventions.

In conclusion, my delegation wishes to reiterate that the international community has the obligation to uphold the opinion handed down by the International Court of Justice. Full cooperation from both the nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon States will ensure a better future for all of us and for future generations.

Miss Tolle (Kenya): Allow me at the outset to congratulate you, Sir, and the other members of the Bureau on your well-deserved election. I wish to assure you of my delegation's support as you steer the work of this Committee to its successful and expected conclusion.

Many urgent issues relevant to the work of this Committee — be they in the field of nuclear disarmament, conventional disarmament or disarmament and development — need our attention. Progress has been made in many areas; for example, the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction will soon enter into force; the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) recently received a new lease on life; and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) already has over 120 signatories. My country is taking the necessary steps to append its signature to that important instrument.

However, a lot more needs to be done in many other areas. Landmines continue to wreak havoc in many areas of the world; the illicit transfer of conventional arms continues unabated; toxic and radioactive wastes continue to find their way to our shores and waters; and the insecurity linked to poverty and underdevelopment continues to haunt us.

This year will be remembered for the progress made towards nuclear disarmament and, in our view, towards the ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons from the face of the earth. It is in that spirit that we participated in the negotiations on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty in Geneva, and subsequently supported General Assembly resolution 50/245 (1996), which adopted the CTBT and thereby opened it for signature.

While it is commendable that despite the many misgivings about the CTBT we have taken the first crucial step forward, it is now the duty of all of us to go beyond it and build on the existing momentum. Kenya, like many other like-minded countries, believes that the CTBT must be seen as the beginning of a process that will eventually free us from the insecurity and fear associated with nuclear weapons.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is an exceptionally important global mechanism for addressing nuclear non-proliferation issues. In this regard, the signing in Cairo on 11 April 1996 by 45 African States and four nuclear-weapon States of the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty, also known as the Pelindaba Treaty, is a historic event that we are confident will contribute to the non-proliferation regime.

The Treaties of Pelindaba, Rarotonga, Tlatelolco and Bangkok fortify the commitments of their signatories to nuclear disarmament. Kenya affirms its belief in such regional agreements as a useful means of reducing tension, encouraging sustainable socio-economic development, promoting confidence and enhancing regional stability and security. These agreements are also intended to encourage peaceful uses of nuclear technology and should, to that extent, be used as vehicles for the transfer of technology.

In this connection, we support the initiative of the delegation of Brazil to promote a nuclear-free zone in the southern hemisphere. We are convinced that nuclear technology will play an instrumental role in the socio-economic sphere and in this regard look forward with anticipation and hope to the sixth Review Conference of the States parties to the NPT.

Kenya also looks forward to the commencement of negotiations on a convention on fissile material cut-off. We reaffirm our support to the mandate already agreed upon, which calls for the establishment of an ad hoc committee to negotiate a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty. Such a treaty would, in addition, have to be truly comprehensive and address the concerns of those of us who believe that our common security is based on, among other factors, a nuclear-free world. In this respect, Kenya supports the convening of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

Kenya welcomes the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the threat or use of nuclear weapons. We hope that the advisory opinion will be adopted at this session of the General Assembly and that together with Security Council resolution 984 (1995) it will form the moral basis for the work of the ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament that the Conference on Disarmament has been mandated to establish.

Kenya is a co-sponsor of the programme of action presented to the Conference on Disarmament in August 1996 by 28 delegations members of the Group of 21. We are convinced that the proposed programme of action provides the most logical approach to further progress in our pursuit of complete nuclear disarmament.

Although international support for the Chemical Weapons Convention continues to grow, Kenya is concerned that it has yet to receive the clear endorsement of the two declared chemical-weapon States. We urge the two States to demonstrate their commitment to the Chemical Weapons Convention through expeditious, positive action.

I now wish to turn to an issue of extreme importance that has been a source of tragedy and nightmares to the entire international community, namely conventional weapons with specific reference to landmines. Landmines have the effect not just of mutilating, killing and maiming civilians, especially innocent women and children, but also of rendering whole agricultural areas physically uninhabitable and economically unproductive. The wanton destruction caused by landmines is unacceptable. States that produce and sell these agents of death should be held accountable and must, as a matter of urgency, stop the production and sale of these evil creations and assist in clearing the affected areas. Talk about smart and dumb mines should not even be contemplated. In our opinion, the effects of smart mines on civilians will remain exactly the same, causing death and destruction wherever they are planted.

Kenya welcomes the efforts of like-minded States on this issue and commends the Government of Canada for organizing the recent International Strategy Conference. We support the objectives set by that Conference and look

forward to a time when the production, use, stockpiling and transfer of all kinds of landmines will be a thing of the past. Kenya hopes that the victims of landmines will not be the forgotten people of our world.

Similarly, we are concerned about the continuing illicit transfer and use of conventional arms, which constitute a major cause of insecurity in many regions of the world, particularly in developing countries. We therefore support all attempts being made to curtail such illicit movements of arms, in particular to regions where conflicts and civil strife persist. We encourage the countries that engage in such transfers of arms, especially to organizations involved in internal conflicts, to desist from such actions which ultimately threaten international peace and security.

The dumping of radioactive and toxic wastes on the shores and in the waters of some developing countries continues to be a cause of concern. The tragedy herein is two-fold: first, a section of our global village produces more waste than it can treat and chooses insensitively to dump it elsewhere; secondly, the dumping ground is totally unprepared to handle such wastes in terms of both technological know-how, which it desperately lacks, and resources, which it has never had. In addition, such wastes dumped indiscriminately cause untold harm to the environment, livelihood and health of the people. In spite of what some in the North might think, there is need to address this issue comprehensively and as soon as possible. In this respect, Kenya welcomes the amendment to the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal adopted in Geneva that prohibits the exports of such wastes from the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries to non-OECD countries as a step in the right direction, but contends that more needs to be done.

It is clear that any achievements in the field of disarmament, both nuclear and conventional, will allow us to focus on more crucial matters pertaining to our socio-economic development. We must all make concerted efforts to break the cycle of poverty and debt burden that continues to engulf us now, compounding the breakdown in law and order and promoting ethnic strife and conflict in many parts of the world.

We cannot allow massive resources to continue to be channelled to armament. Disarmament should therefore free some of the tied-up resources for development purposes. Let us strive towards that end as we approach the next millennium.

Introduction and consideration of draft resolutions submitted on all disarmament and international security agenda items

The Chairman: I now call on the representative of Hungary, who will introduce draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.2.

Mr Tóth (Hungary): On behalf of the sponsors, I would like to introduce today draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.2 on the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction.

The following 44 States are sponsors of the draft resolution: Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Colombia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Hungary, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, the Republic of Korea, Poland, Portugal, Romania, the Russian Federation, Singapore, Slovakia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America.

The draft resolution notes with satisfaction that there are 139 States parties to the Convention, including all the permanent members of the Security Council. It recalls the General Assembly's resolution adopted without a vote at the forty-eighth session, in which it commended the final report of the Ad Hoc Group of Governmental Experts to Identify and Examine Potential Verification Measures from a Scientific and Technical Standpoint, agreed to by consensus at the Ad Hoc Group's last meeting at Geneva on 24 September 1993.

The draft resolution recalls further the General Assembly's resolution adopted without a vote at the forty-ninth session, in which it welcomed the final report of the Special Conference of the States Parties to the Convention held in September 1994, adopted by consensus, in which the States parties agreed to establish an ad hoc group, open to all States parties, whose objective would be to consider appropriate measures, including possible verification measures, and draft proposals to strengthen the Convention, to be included, as appropriate, in a legally binding instrument to be submitted for the consideration of the States parties.

The draft resolution recalls the exchange of information and data agreed to in the Final Declaration of

the Third Review Conference, as well as the provisions of the Convention related to scientific and technological cooperation and the related provisions of the final report of the Ad Hoc Group of Governmental Experts, the final report of the Special Conference of the States Parties to the Convention and the Final Documents of the Review Conferences.

In its operative part, the draft resolution welcomes the progress made by the Ad Hoc Group in pursuing the mandate established by the Special Conference and urges the Ad Hoc Group, in order to fulfil its mandate, to intensify its work with a view to completing it as soon as possible before the commencement of the Fifth Review Conference and submit its report, which shall be adopted by consensus, to the States parties, to be considered at a special conference.

It requests the Secretary-General to continue to render the necessary assistance to the depository Governments of the Convention and to provide such services as may be required for the implementation of the decisions and recommendations of the Review Conferences, as well as the decisions contained in the Final Report of the Special Conference, including all necessary assistance to the Ad Hoc Group.

It welcomes the convening, at the request of the States parties, of the Fourth Review Conference of the Parties to the Convention at Geneva from 25 November to 6 December 1996.

Finally, the draft resolution calls upon all signatory States that have not yet ratified the Convention to do so without delay, and also calls upon those other States that have not signed the Convention to become parties thereto at an early date, thus contributing to the achievement of universal adherence to the Convention.

It is the hope of the sponsors that additional delegations will render their support to the draft by joining in sponsoring the draft resolution on the Biological Weapons Convention.

Organization of work

The Chairman: I would like to take this opportunity to remind you that, in accordance with the programme of work and timetable we have adopted, the deadline for submission of draft resolutions will be Thursday, 29 October. In this regard, I would like to urge concerned delegations to submit their draft resolutions as soon a possible in order to facilitate the processing of these documents by the Secretariat, in particular drafts on traditional agenda items that have been discussed for many years.

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.